CLAIMS

1. In a distributed communications system, a method of dynamically configuring access to services between a remote communications node and a remote communications

5   device comprising:

determining if the remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system;

configuring the remote communications node as a primary gateway if remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system and

10   configuring the remote communications node as a secondary gateway if the remote communications node is not communicating with the distributed communications system;

initializing the remote communications device; and

dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to optimally access services in a serial configuration.

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2. The method of claim 1, wherein if the remote communications node functions as the secondary gateway then the remote communications device functions as the primary gateway, and wherein if the remote communications device functions as the secondary gateway then the remote communications node functions as the primary gateway.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises the remote communications node reconfiguring between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and the remote communications device reconfiguring between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and

25   vis versa.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary

30   gateway respectively to minimize user cost.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the

remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize communication time.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access
5   services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively optimize a communication link.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring comprises allocating
10 the primary gateway and the secondary gateway between the remote communications node and the remote communications device based on a user-programmable function.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the services are distributed services.

15 9. The method of claim 1, wherein determining if the remote communications node is communicating comprises determining if the remote communications node is communicating with a communications node.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring comprises
20 negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, and wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the secondary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the primary gateway.

25 11. The method of claim 1, wherein dynamically configuring comprises negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the primary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the secondary gateway.

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12. A method of optimizing access to services in a distributed communications system having a remote communications node and a remote communications device comprising:

determining if the remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system;

configuring the remote communications node as a primary gateway if remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system and

5   configuring the remote communications node as a secondary gateway if the remote communications node is not communicating with the distributed communications system;

initializing the remote communications device; and

dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to optimally access services in a serial configuration, wherein the

10   remote communications node reconfigures between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and the remote communications device reconfigures between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and vis versa.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access

15   services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize user cost.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access

20   services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize communication time.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access

25   services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively optimize a communication link.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring comprises

30   allocating the primary gateway and the secondary gateway between the remote communications node and the remote communications device based on a user-programmable function.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the services are distributed services.

18. The method of claim 12, wherein determining if the remote communications node is communicating comprises determining if the remote communications node is communicating with a communications node.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring comprises negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, and wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the secondary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the primary gateway.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein dynamically configuring comprises negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the primary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the secondary gateway.

21. A computer-readable medium containing computer instructions for instructing a processor to perform a method of dynamically configuring access to services between a remote communications node and a remote communications device, the instructions comprising:

determining if the remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system;

configuring the remote communications node as a primary gateway if remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system and configuring the remote communications node as a secondary gateway if the remote communications node is not communicating with the distributed communications system;

initializing the remote communications device; and

dynamically configuring the remote communications node and the remote communications device to optimally access services in a serial configuration.

22. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein if the remote communications node functions as the secondary gateway then the remote communications device functions as the primary gateway, and wherein if the remote communications device functions as the secondary gateway then the remote

5   communications node functions as the primary gateway.

23. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises the remote communications node reconfiguring between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and the remote

10   communications device reconfiguring between functioning as the primary gateway and the secondary gateway and vis versa.

24. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote

15   communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize user cost.

25. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote

20   communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize communication time.

26. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote

25   communications node and the remote communications device to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively optimize a communication link.

27. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring comprises allocating the primary gateway and the secondary gateway between the remote

30   communications node and the remote communications device based on a user-programmable function.

28. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein the services are distributed services.

29. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein determining if the remote communications node is communicating comprises determining if the remote communications node is communicating with a communications node.

30. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring comprises negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, and wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the secondary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the primary gateway.

31. The computer-readable medium in claim 21, wherein dynamically configuring comprises negotiating for services between the remote communications node and a plurality of remote communications devices, wherein the remote communications node is chosen as the primary gateway and one of the plurality of remote communications devices is chosen as the secondary gateway.

32. In a distributed communications system, a method of dynamically configuring access to services between a remote communications nodes and a plurality of remote communications devices comprising:

determining if the remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system;

configuring the remote communications node as a primary gateway if remote communications node is communicating with the distributed communications system and configuring the remote communications node as a secondary gateway if the remote communications node is not communicating with the distributed communications system;

initializing one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices;

negotiating for services between the remote communications node and one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices; and

dynamically configuring the remote communications node and one or more of the remote communications devices to optimally access services in a serial configuration.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize user cost.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively to minimize communication time.

35. The method of claim 32, wherein dynamically configuring to optimally access services comprises dynamically configuring the remote communications node and one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices to function as either the primary gateway or the secondary gateway respectively optimize a communication link.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein dynamically configuring comprises allocating the primary gateway and the secondary gateway between the remote communications node and one or more of the plurality of remote communications devices based on a user-programmable function.